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ABSTRACT

A Congressional staff study was undertaken to analyze the Literacy Management Information Project Report (LMIPR), released by the U.S. Department of Education in May 1986, and to determine whether its findings were valid. The LMIPR found that there are 79 literacy-related programs administered by 14 federal agencies and that $347.6 million was spent for adult literacy activities in fiscal year (FY) 1985. The committee staff telephoned the program directors of the 79 programs that the LMIPR listed as having literacy-related activities for adults and contacted 20 randomly selected state directors to verify program content and dollar figures reported by the LMIPR. Approximately 90 percent of the officials contacted said that they had not been asked for their input when the LMIPR was being prepared. Some of the major findings of the staff study were as follows: (1) of the 79 programs in 14 federal agencies that were identified in the LMIPR as conducting literacy-related activities for adults, only 10 (13 percent of the program), in 5 federal agencies, were definitely conducting literacy activities, and 38 (48 percent) of the programs were not conducting adult literacy activities; (2) several programs receive no funding for literacy activities; (3) 25 (32 percent) of the programs do not have literacy as their major function; (4) in FY 1985, only $126.5 million or 36 percent of the $347.6 million was spent on literacy activities for adults; (5) the 10 programs that have literacy as their major function accounted for $99.9 million or 79 percent of the $126.5 million; and (6) the Adult Education State Administered Program accounted for $81 million or 81 percent of the $99.4 million and 64 percent of the $126.5 million. (The report presents a short analysis of the 79 programs.) (KC)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FEDERAL INITIATIVE IN THE AREA OF ADULT LITERACY

STAFF REPORT OF THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE FEDERAL INITIATIVE IN THE AREA OF ADULT LITERACY

Introduction

There has been gross misinformation on the Federal efforts to combat the problem of adult illiteracy in this country. At a time when government, the private sector, academia, and individuals are united in wanting to address the problem, it is a disservice to promote misinformation and misunderstanding. In order to properly address the problem, we must first begin with an accurate understanding of what is currently being done or not being done, and build upon this knowledge.

The Department of Education released the Literacy Management Information Project Report (LMIPR) in May, 1986, in an attempt to quantify the amount of Federal assistance being spent on adult literacy activities. The LMIPR found that there are seventy-nine literacy-related programs administered by fourteen Federal agencies. The LMIPR also found that in FY 1985 $347.6 million was expended for literacy activities.

The purpose of this staff report and investigation was to analyze the LMIPR and to determine whether its findings were valid.

Staff telephoned the program directors of the seventy-nine programs, that the LMIPR listed as having literacy-related activities for the adult illiterate population. Also, twenty randomly selected state directors were contacted to verify this programmatic information. In addition to program content, the directors were queried on the accuracy of the dollar figures reported by the LMIPR. Approximately ninety percent of the officials contacted stated that they were not aware of the LMIPR and that they had not been contacted for their in-put when the study was prepared.

Summary of Major Findings

I. Of the 79 programs in 14 Federal agencies that were identified in the LMIPR to be conducting literacy-related activities for the adult illiterate population, the following was found:

—Only ten or 13 percent of the program in 5 Federal agencies are definitely conducting literacy activities and providing services for the adult illiterate population.

—Thirty-eight or 48 percent of the programs were not conducting literacy activities that address the adult illiterate population.

—One program is a technical assistance program that receives no funding for literacy activities.

—One program is a library program that receives no funding for literacy activities.

—Four programs do not normally conduct literacy activities for the adult illiterate population. However, in FY 1985 they did conduct one-time only literacy projects.
—Twenty-five or 32 percent of the programs do not have literacy as their major function. It is not possible to determine the extent of their involvement because they have no special set-asides for literacy activities.

II. Of the $347.6 million identified by the LMIPR that was spent on literacy-related activities for the adult illiterate population, the following was found:

—In FY 1985, only $126.5 million or 36 percent of the $347.6 million was spent on literacy activities that address the adult illiterate population.
—The ten programs that have literacy as their major function accounted for $99.9 million or 79 percent of the $126.5 million.
—The Adult Education State Administered Program accounted for $81 million or 81 percent of the $99.4 million and 64 percent of the $126.5 million.

Following is an analysis of the 79 programs:

1. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (29 PROGRAMS)

Two programs are research programs that are not conducting literacy activities.

Library Research and Demonstration
National Vocational Education Research

Two programs are state-administered, library programs. Literacy is only one of ten activities that they may address. States decide which of the ten activities that they will address. It was not possible to determine the extent of their involvement in literacy activities.

Public Library Services, Library Service and Construction Act (LSCA), State Administered Program Title I
Interlibrary Cooperation, Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), State Administered Program Title III

Educational Research and Development: This program was never a separate program. It was part of the Teaching and Learning Division which no longer exists. This program did not conduct literacy activities.

The Adult Literacy Initiative: While related to the problem of adult illiteracy, this program is a technical assistance program. It receives no funding to provide services to the target population. Its purpose is to encourage and promote research and volunteer programs.

The Secretary's Discretionary Fund: This program is not funded for the purpose of conducting activities for the adult illiterate population. It is at the secretary's discretion.

It did provide $112,000 for special projects in FY 1984. There were no adult illiteracy projects funded in FY 1985 or FY 1986.

The following fourteen programs, that primarily address populations other than the adult illiterate population, were found not to be conducting literacy activities for the target population.

Innovative Programs for Severely Handicapped Children
Comprehensive Services for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living
Postsecondary Education Program for Handicapped Children
Special Services for Disadvantaged Students
Bilingual Vocational Training
Neglected and Delinquent Children, Chapter I, Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981
Vocational Education—Consumer and Homemaker Education
Bilingual Education
Rehabilitation Services—Service Project
Handicapped—Innovation and Development
Library Services for Indian Tribes and Hawaiian Natives, Library Services and Construction Act, Title IV
Vocational Education—Indian and Hawaiian Natives
Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Handicapped Youth

Vocational Education—Basic Grants to States: According to the LMIPR, in FY 1985, $147,000,000 was expended by vocational education programs on activities that address the adult illiterate population. This figure represents more than half of the $263 million that was identified by the LMIPR in the Department of Education, and it represents approximately one-third of the $347.6 million total figure that is quoted in the LMIPR.

The federal director of this program and fourteen state directors were contacted and questioned about the activities of their programs. All reported that they did not know how the $147,000,000 figure for activities that address the adult illiterate population had been determined. All stated that they had not been consulted by the researchers working on the LMIPR about what the figure should be.

Nine of the state directors reported that they were not conducting activities that address the adult illiterate population. Three reported that it is impossible to determine if there are any literacy activities being conducted in their states. Two directors reported that there are several special projects being conducted in their states. The two stated that approximately $2 to $3 million would be a high estimate for these projects.

All of the directors stated that $147,000,000 was an extremely high amount of money to be quoted for literacy activities that address the adult illiterate population since the primary focus of the program is vocational skill training.

A mathematical calulation performed by committee staff finds that the $147,000,000 was derived by utilizing the 22 percent set-aside for disadvantaged youth. In addition to the inaccuracies cited above, the use of this figure assumes that all disadvantaged youth are illiterate, without statistical proof.

The Adult Education—State Administered Program: According to the LMIPR, this program expended $81,570,400 on literacy activities in FY 1985. This figure was derived by taking the total yearly appropriation minus the 20 percent maximum amount allowed to be spent for adult secondary education.

This $81,570,400 represents the second major amount of money that was quoted in the LMIPR. It represents almost another one-

third of the $347.6 million that the LMIPR found to have been spent on adult literacy activities.

Of the seventy-nine programs in the LMIPR, this is the one major program that is indeed actually providing services to the adult illiterate population. It is the one primary program that has the qualified, trained professional personnel who are capable of delivering services to the target population. Funding for this program has remained at approximately $100,000,000 for the past six years. When this figure is adjusted for inflation, funding for this program has actually decreased.

Indian Education—Adult Indian Education Program: According to the LMIPR, this program expended $659,618 during FY 1985.

The survey found that $1,176,000 was actually spent on literacy activities for the adult population in FY 1985.

The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE): This program awards grants to a variety of different types of programs. It was learned that it provides grants of approximately $100,000 to $200,000 per year for projects that promote literacy.

The LMIPR reported $210,118 for FY 1985 for this program.

The College Work Study Program: In FY 1985, this program reallocated approximately $650,000 of its funds to state adult education programs in the form of grants.

The LMIPR reported $750,000 for this program.

The Library Literacy Program, Library Services and Construction Act, Title IV: This program was funded for the first time in FY 1985. It was funded for $4,736,643, and it began to provide literacy services in FY 1986.

The LMIPR reported $5,000,000 for FY 1986.

The National Diffusion Network: The purpose of this program is to recognize exemplary programs throughout the educational system. It provides dissemination funds of $50,000 per program that it finds to be exemplary. In FY 1985, it funded three programs that supported literacy.

The LMIPR amount of $150,000 for FY 1985 was confirmed.

The National Institute of Handicapped Research: The LMIPR stated that $400,000 was spent on activities for the adult illiterate population.

Through the telephone survey, it was learned that this program develops communication devices for the severely handicapped. It does conduct some clinical research and some of its clients are members of the adult illiterate population. It was confirmed that $400,000 is a good estimate for this service.

2. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (12 PROGRAMS)

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities—Basic Support and Advocacy Grants Program: According to the LMIPR, this program expended $50,250,000 in FY 1985 on activities for the adult illiterate population. This was the program's entire allocation for that year and, it represents the third major amount of money that was quoted in the LMIPR.

However, upon contacting the federal director and six state directors of this program, the survey found that this program does

not provide literacy activities for the adult illiterate population, and there is no money being expended for this purpose.

Five other programs listed by the LMIPR as having adult literacy activities were found to be conducting no activities for the adult illiterate population.

Native American Programs—Financial Assistance Grants

Social Services Block Grant Program

Refugee and Entrant Assistance—State Administered Programs

Refugee Assistance—Voluntary Agency Programs

Special Programs for the Aging—Title III, Parts A & B Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers

Two of the twelve programs listed by the LMIPR are research programs that do not provide services to the adult illiterate population.

Clinical Research Related to Neurological and Communicative Disorders

Biological Basis Research in the Neurosciences and Communicative Sciences

Special Programs for the Aging—Title IV, Research, Training and Demonstration: This program does not normally provide services for the adult illiterate population. However, in FY 1985, it did conduct a one time only activity. It expended $800,000 by awarding grants to 20 states.

The LMIPR reported $870,000 for this program.

Two programs are possibly conducting some activities for the adult illiterate population. Through the survey, it was learned that it is not possible to determine the extent of their involvement nor how much money is being spent in this area.

Work Incentive Program (WIN)

Community Services Block Grant Program

The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families—Head Start: It was learned, through the survey, that this program does not normally conduct adult literacy activities. However, in FY 1985 it did conduct a one time only demonstration, and $78,228 was expended.

The LMIPR reported that a dollar amount was not available for this program.

3. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (4 PROGRAMS)

The LMIPR reported that $25,178,808 was spent by the military on skills programs in FY 1985. This figure represents the fourth largest amount of money quoted in the LMIPR.

The survey revealed that only $17,000,000 was actually spent in FY 1985.

Air Force—Basic Skills Program (BSP) ($1.5 million)

Army—Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP) ($12.1 million)

Marine Corps Voluntary Education—Basic Education Skills Program (BESP) ($0.9 million)

Navy—Skill Enhancement Program (SEP) ($2.5 million)

4. THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (1 PROGRAM)

The U.S. Coast Guard—Basic Educational Enrichment Program (BEEP): The LMIPR reported $167,000 was expended by this program. This amount was found to be correct.

5. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library does operate a program entitled the Center for the Book. Its purpose is not directed to the adult illiterate population. The purpose of the program is to stimulate public interest in books and reading, and to encourage the study of books. The program relies on *private funding* to support the program.

The LMIPR reported that funds were not available for the Library.

6. THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (3 PROGRAMS)

The Job Corps Program (See Department of Labor): This program is actually a part of the Job Corps Program in the Department of Labor. It functions as a sub-contract of the Department of Labor.

The survey revealed that two programs are not conducting activities which address the problem of illiteracy among the nation's adult population.

Community Facilities Loans

Cooperative Extension Service

7. THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (6 PROGRAMS)

Two programs are not conducting literacy activities for the adult illiterate population.

Lower Income Housing Assistance Program (Section 8—Housing Assistance Payment Program for Very Low Income Families—Existing Housing/Moderate Rehabilitation)

Indian Community Development Block Grant Program

Three programs do not have literacy as their major function. It is not possible to determine the extent of their involvement because they have no special set-aside for literacy.

Community Development Block Grants/Entitlement Grants

Community Development Block Grants/Small Cities Program

Community Development Block Grants/State's Program

Public and Indian Housing—Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (Public and Indian Housing Modernization): The LMIPR reported that this program spent $4,500,000 on literacy-related programs.

The telephone survey revealed that this was a one time only project that was conducted in FY 1985. The $4,500,000 provided grants for all types of programs. Literacy programs may have been included. There is no means to determine how much of this amount was spent on literacy programs.

This program does not normally conduct literacy activities.

8. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (6 PROGRAMS)

Three of the programs deliver no services to the adult illiterate population.

Policy and Program Development, Research and Evaluation
Citizenship Education and Training
The Training Program

The Adult Basic Education Program: The LMIPR stated that the amount of funds expended for this program was not available.

This was confirmed by the survey.

The Cuban and Haitian Entrant Resettlement Program: The survey found that this program operates a halfway house for Cubans who have just been released from prison. It also provides shelter, clothing etc., and a small block of education for children who have been apprehended by immigration. The program spends approximately $100,000 per year on all of these activities.

The LMIPR listed $700,000 for this program.

The Technical Assistance Program—The National Institute of Corrections: In FY 1985, this program received a $2.5 million set-aside from Congress for vocational education programs. The program awarded $1,581,975 to various associations and universities for the purpose of training correctional educators to develop and implement literacy programs in prisons, to acquire materials and to develop and implement computer-assisted instruction in academic and vocational programs.

The LMIPR reported $1,625,000 for this program.

9. THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (1 PROGRAM)

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Adult Education Program: The survey revealed that there are literacy activities being conducted by this program but it is not possible to determine a dollar amount.

The LMIPR reported that a dollar amount was not available.

10. THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (5 PROGRAMS)

Officials of these five programs reported that they are training their participants in job-related skills. There are some literacy skills being addressed in the training programs.

The Job Corps Program addresses basic skills more directly. However, the age range of its participants is 14 to 21.

The five programs provide services for both adults and youth, and it is not possible to determine the extent of their involvement nor the amount of money that is being spent for literacy activities.

Job Corps (Title IV-A, Job Training Partnership Act)
Employment and Training Assistance—Dislocated Workers (Title III—Job Training Partnership Act)
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (Title IV—Job Training Partnership Act)
Training Services for the Disadvantaged (Title II—Job Training Partnership Act)
Native American Employment and Training Program

11. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (2 PROGRAMS)

The Appalachian State Research, Technical Assistance, Demonstration Projects: The LMIPR reported $490,000 for this program. This amount was confirmed by the survey.

The Appalachian Vocational and Other Education Facilities and Operations: The LMIPR reported $103,969 for this program. This amount was confirmed.

12. THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (5 PROGRAMS)

The survey found that the target population for these five programs is former military personnel. The purpose of these programs is to assist them and their dependents to further their education.

It was learned that the only program that addresses the adult illiterate population is the Federal Employee Literacy Tutor (FELT) Program, which is an effort to recruit federal employees to volunteer as tutors for the adult illiterate population.

Veterans Educational Assistance (GI Bill)

Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Veterans (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Dependents Educational Assistance

Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance (Voluntary-Contributory Matching Program)

Vocational Training for Certain Veterans Receiving VA Pension

13. THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY (1 PROGRAM)

The Tennessee Valley Region—Economic and Community Development Program: The survey found that this program has made a local decision to allocate $60,000 in their FY 1987 budget for a first time, once only pilot adult literacy program to be conducted in conjunction with IBM.

This $60,000 is seed money for the project which will continue for five years.

The LMIPR reported that a dollar amount for this program was not available.

14. ACTION (4 PROGRAMS)

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA): This program has received a first time $2 million set-aside funding in their *FY 1987 budget.* This money will be used to establish a volunteer literacy corps.

The other three programs have no set-aside funding for literacy activities.

The LMIPR reports that dollar amounts are not available for these programs.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Mini-Grant Program

Volunteer Demonstration Program

The survey revealed that in FY 1985 approximately $22 million was spent on literacy programs throughout the agency. Approximately $18 million was spent on stipends for the volunteers, and $4 million was spent on project costs.